CHAPTER THREE: THE UNITED STATES WAR DEPARTMENT AT FORT MARION, 1821-1933

ESTABLISHING THE AMERICAN TERRITORY OF FLORIDA

A ceremony held July 10, 1821, at Castillo de San Marcos officially marked the transfer of East Florida from Spain to the United States. Some Americans were unenthusiastic about acquisition of territory that U. S. Representative John Randolph described as "a land of swamps, of quagmires, of frogs and alligators and mosquitoes."[37] Nevertheless, many other citizens, particularly in the South and West, viewed the removal of the Spanish from the east coast as essential to the prosperity and sovereignty of the nation. Supporters, including President James Monroe, also believed that acquisition of Florida would pacify the Seminole Indians and bring an end to attacks on white settlers.[38]

The newly established territory united East and West Florida under one government, and Monroe appointed Andrew Jackson its first military governor. American farmers began to migrate into the territory soon after its acquisition, carving farms and plantations out of the fertile wilderness of north Florida. Other citizens moved into the territory's largest towns, St. Augustine and Pensacola, mingling with former Spanish citizens who remained in Florida under American rule. The United States Army established outposts throughout the territory; the garrison at St. Augustine occupied Castillo de San Marcos and several Spanish government buildings. In 1825, the War Department changed the name of the Castillo to Fort Marion, in honor of American Revolutionary War General Francis Marion.[39]

The Spanish had limited expenditures on building maintenance and improvements during their final years of occupation because of funding shortages and uncertainty about the future of the colony. As a result, many of the public buildings and private residences in St. Augustine were in poor condition at the time of American occupation. At Fort Marion, cracks in the

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[37]Quoted in George E. Buker, "The Americanization of St. Augustine, 1821-1865," in *The Oldest City: St. Augustine, Saga of Survival,* ed. Jean Parker Waterbury (St. Augustine: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1983), 151.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid., 152: Arana, et al., 18

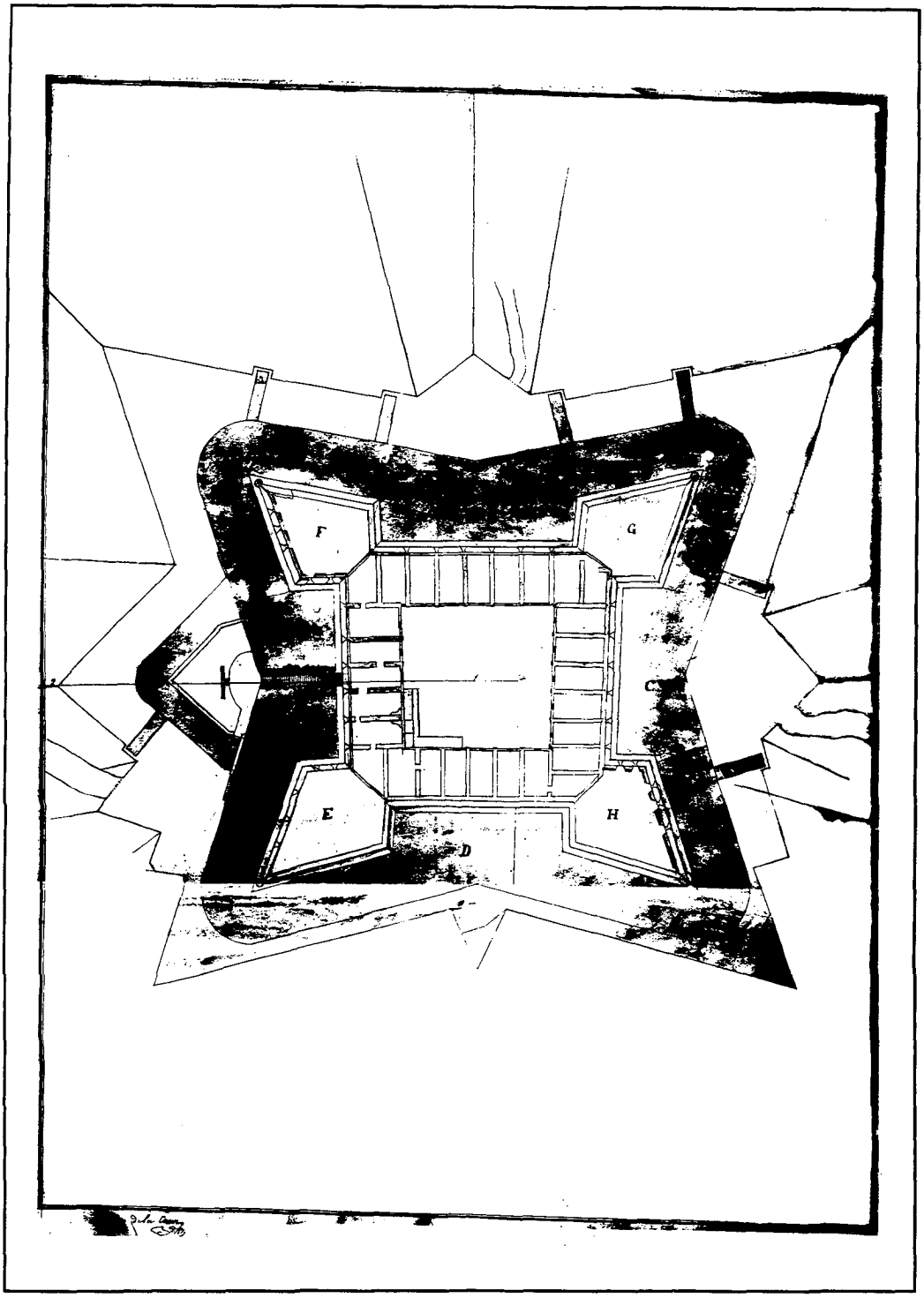

Figure 10. Plan of Castillo, 1821

masonry walls, a crumbling water battery, and leaks in the terreplein were among the structural problems identified by American engineers. These problems made the fort uninhabitable; therefore, the St. Francis barracks, built during the British period to house soldiers, were repaired to house the garrison, and Fort Marion was used to store supplies and provisions. The War Department also permitted local authorities to use several casemates as a prison.[40]

THE SECOND SEMINOLE WAR, 1835-1842

The belief that American occupation of Florida would provide security against warring Indian tribes helped gamer public support for the acquisition of Florida in 1821. It was soon clear, however, that fighting between the Seminoles and white settlers had continued unabated, and the government was forced to intervene in order to protect American lives and property. Negotiations in September 1823 resulted in the Treaty of Moultrie Creek, which established a four-million-acre reservation in the center of the Florida peninsula for the Seminole tribes. The treaty also required the government to provide money and supplies during the move and to reimburse tribesmen for improvements on the land they were forced to abandon.[41]

The move to the reservation progressed slowly, but most tribes had relocated by 1826. Hunger soon forced the Indians off the reservation in search of food on neighboring farms; white settlers responded by petitioning the federal government for removal of the tribes to the West. In 1830 Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, which authorized the government to trade land west of the Mississippi River for Native American lands in the east and to assist in the removal of the tribes to their new homes. In the Treaty of Payne's Landing (1832) and the Treaty of Fort Gibson (1833), Seminole leaders agreed to removal, but soon after they reneged and declared both agreements invalid. Tensions mounted between the Indians and Americans, reaching a climax in December 1835 with the murder of the federal Indian agent and several others at Fort King and the ambush of an American detachment from Fort Brooke.[42]

The Second Seminole War raged for seven years throughout the peninsula and ultimately resulted in the death or removal of virtually all Native Americans from Florida. St. Augustine became an important base of operations for the United States Army during the early stages of the war, and the population expanded with the influx of soldiers and refugees from neighboring plantations. While no skirmishes occurred in the city, attacks in outlying areas kept citizens on

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[40]Buker, 152: Edwin C. Bearss, "Castillo de San Marcos: The War Department Years, 1821-1933," in *Historic Structure Report for Castillo de San Marcos National Monument,* Edwin C. Bearss and John C. Paige (Denver: National Park Service, 1983), 36-44.

[41]Buker, 161; John K. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1985),29-50.

[42]Mahon, 5l-61, 72-83, 101-6.

alert. Fort Marion continued to serve as a storehouse for weapons, supplies, and provisions for the army during this period.[43]

The fort also served briefly as a prison for captured Seminole warriors. King Philip, Coacoochee, Blue Snake, Osceola, and Coa Hadjo were among the Indian leaders captured by American troops during the fall of 1837. Their loss weakened Seminole resistance, but the dramatic escape of Coacoochee and nineteen others from the fortress prison in November brought renewed vigor to the fight. Many of the prisoners who did not escape, including Osceola, were later sent to Fort Moultrie in South Carolina for safekeeping.[44]

As the war progressed, the conflict moved farther south into the Everglades, but the superior strength of the Americans ultimately proved too much for the natives. In 1842, the Seminoles conceded defeat and loaded their belongings onto ships headed for their new homes west of the Mississippi. Approximately 4,000 Seminole Indians were either killed in the fighting or moved west at the conclusion of the war, leaving few Native Americans in Florida. The victory brought peace to Florida at a substantial cost: the Second Seminole War was the most expensive of the Indian wars, costing approximately $20 million dollars and 2,000 American lives.[45]

FORT MARION AS A COASTAL FORTIFICATION

Engineers and officials in the War Department did not view Fort Marion as essential to national defense prior to the Second Seminole War. Military engineers considered the fort a solid, defensible work, but they also believed the bastioned design of the fortress outdated. War Department officials observed that St. Augustine did not hold a position of strategic significance in Florida: the territorial capital moved to Tallahassee in 1824, and large ships found Matanzas Bay difficult to access. As a result, the War Department made few efforts to improve the fortress in the early years of occupation. Local citizens protested the Army's neglect in 1832, petitioning Congress to appropriate funds for repair

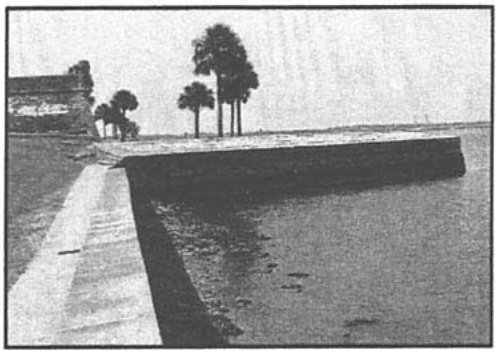

Figure 11. View of seawall from south, 1991

[43]Sidney Walter Martin, *Florida During the Territorial Days* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1944), 183.

[44]Mahon, 212-24.

[45]Ibid., 238; Albert Manucy, "Some Military Affairs in Territorial Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly 25:2* (Oct. 1946), 210.

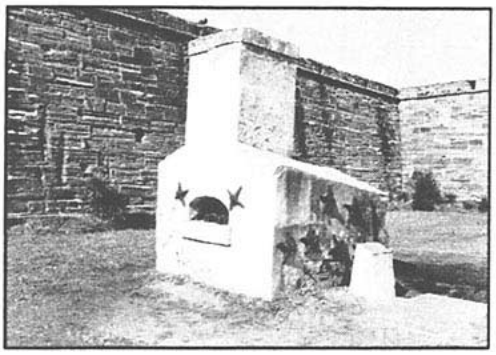

Figure 12. View of hot shot furnace from south, 1995

Figure 13. View of water battery from south, 1991

of the fort and reconstruction of the city's seawall. Congress allocated $20,000 the same year to make needed repairs to the structures.[46]

The seawall received top priority in the expenditure of funds because of a breach which threatened property and lives in town. The Army Corps of Engineers directed the reconstruction of the seawall over a period of fourteen years. The outbreak of the Second Seminole War forced the government to reevaluate the importance of Fort Marion within the coastal defense system, and additional expenditures for construction of a water battery were approved in 1842. Workers filled the moat between the east curtain wall and the seawall, building gun emplacements on the battery terreplein. They also built a hot shot furnace, which was used to heat iron cannon balls for firing at flammable targets like wooden ships.[47]

The completion of the water battery and hot shot furnace in 1844 ended construction projects at Fort Marion. The fort's defenses were updated sufficiently to be included as part of the nation's coastal defense system. Like many of the contemporary fortifications along the American coastline, however, the fort lacked one ingredient key to its defense: a garrison to man its guns. When Confederate troops came to take over Fort Marion in 1861, they found only one elderly caretaker occupying the fortress.[48]

FLORIDA IN THE CIVIL WAR, 1861-1865

At the conclusion of the Second Seminole War in 1842, Florida began a gradual return to a peacetime economy. Farmers returned to their fields, and merchants resumed trade. Soldiers stationed in St. Augustine during the war were relocated to other posts around the country. Migration into the territory from the north continued, so that by 1845 Florida had sufficient

[46]Bearss, 35, 46-8.

[47]Bearss, 152-230: Albert Manucy, *Artillery Through the* Ages (Washington: National Park Service, 1949, reprint 1985), 69.

[48]Arana, et al., 18-19

population to apply for statehood.[49] Congress accepted Iowa and Florida into statehood simultaneously, maintaining the balance between free and slave states in the Union. The need for such compromise illustrated the growing tension between the slave states of the South and the free states of the North, a tension that led to the secession of South Carolina in late 1860. On January 10, 1861, Florida followed suit and the next month became part of the newly formed Confederate States of America.[50]

Throughout the South, secession governors ordered state troops to seize federally owned forts. In Florida, the governor sent state troops into Fort Marion, Fort Clinch, Fort Barrancas, and the Chattahoochee Arsenal five days before the formal act of secession by the legislature. Troops entered Fort Marion on January 7 and took the fortress from its solitary caretaker without a fight. At Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, federal troops did not surrender to Confederate forces, and the siege on the fort in April 1861 signalled the beginning of the Civil War.[51]

Florida contributed minimally to the war effort, both because of its limited supply of men and provisions and its location far south of the major theaters of the war. In St. Augustine, troops dismantled the guns at Fort Marion and shipped them to positions more important to the defense of the South. When Union gunboats appeared outside the harbor in March 1862, Confederate forces quickly departed the city; federal troops occupied St. Augustine on March 11 without confrontation. The Union forces upgraded Fort Marion to a state of defense, but the Confederacy made no attempt to reclaim the city for the duration of the war.[52]

The federal occupation of the city continued after the Confederate surrender at Appomattox; troops assigned to Florida during Reconstruction were headquartered in St. Augustine. The strain of the war effort and the absence of winter tourists combined to deplete the town's resources, and recovery occurred slowly. Yet, by the 1870s, improvement was apparent: the local orange industry was rebounding, tourists were returning, and the first suburbs began to appear outside the old city walls.[53]

FORT MARION AND THE WESTERN INDIAN WARS

As St. Augustine recovered from the Civil War, army engineers once again evaluated the importance of Fort Marion within the coastal defense system. In 1866, the War Department

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[49]Buker, 160-72.

[50]Bearss, 255: Tindall and Shi, 405.

[51]Bearss, 255-6: E. Merton Coulter, *The Confederate States of America,* vol. 7 of *A History of the South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), 34.

[52]Coulter, 398: Bearss, 256-63.

[53]Thomas Graham, "The Flagler Era, 1865-1913," in , *The Oldest City: St. Augustine, Saga of Survival,* ed. Jean Parker Waterbury (St. Augustine: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1983), 183-9.

declared the fort nonessential to the nation's defenses but worthy of maintenance until further notice. The garrison stationed in St. Augustine made needed repairs to the fort and prepared it for possible use as a prison.[54]

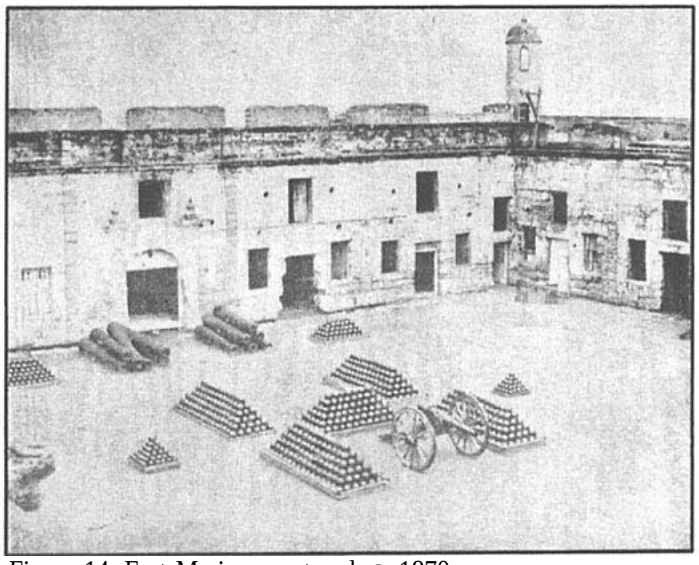

Figure 14. Fort Marion courtyard, C. 1870

In the aftermath of the Civil War, the attention of the federal government shifted to the Great Plains, where the march of American settlers across the continent had continued virtually unabated throughout the war. The search for precious minerals and new agricultural lands drew miners from the west and farmers from the east toward the center of the continent. This new population of settlers not only infringed upon Indian lands but also threatened resources upon which the natives relied. While some tribes agreed to removal to new reservations, many others resisted, remembering the broken promises of the 1830s that had originally placed them on reservations. The Western Indian wars began in the early 1860s and continued through the 1880s.[55]

In the course of the Indian campaigns, the army captured a number of rebellious natives for whom accommodations removed from the scene of battle were needed. Army officials chose Fort Marion, which had been used as a prison periodically from the time of the American Revolution, to house some of the captives. Seventy-one members of the Cheyenne, Kiowa, Comanche, Caddo, and Arapaho tribes arrived at the fort on May 21, 1875. Lt. Richard H. Pratt, who escorted the Indians to Florida, directed the construction of a wooden shed on the terreplein to house the prisoners.[56]

Pratt attempted to educate and assimilate the Indians during the three years they were at Fort Marion, teaching them vocational skills as well as arithmetic, history, and English. He also encouraged them to make souvenirs to sell to tourists for spending money. When the prisoners were released by the War Department in 1878 to return home, a group of young men went to the Hampton Institute in Virginia to further their education and assimilation. Pratt's experience

[54]Bearss, 262.

[55]Tindall and Shi, 478-82.

[56]Bearss, 275-80.

with the Native American captives at Fort Marion led him to establish the Carlisle Indian Training School in Pennsylvania in 1880.[57]

Conflicts with the western tribes continued into the 1880s. In April 1886, a new group of prisoners arrived in St. Augustine from Arizona. The seventy-seven Apaches had surrendered to the army and were sent to Florida while the rest of the tribe was still at large. The Indians lived in army tents on the parade ground of the fort. By January 1887, the total number of prisoners at the fort was 447. As with the group that preceded them, the Apaches were educated in a special school, and tourists frequented the fort for a view of the men, women, and children. After a year of captivity in Florida, the prisoners were shipped to a reservation in Oklahoma.[58]

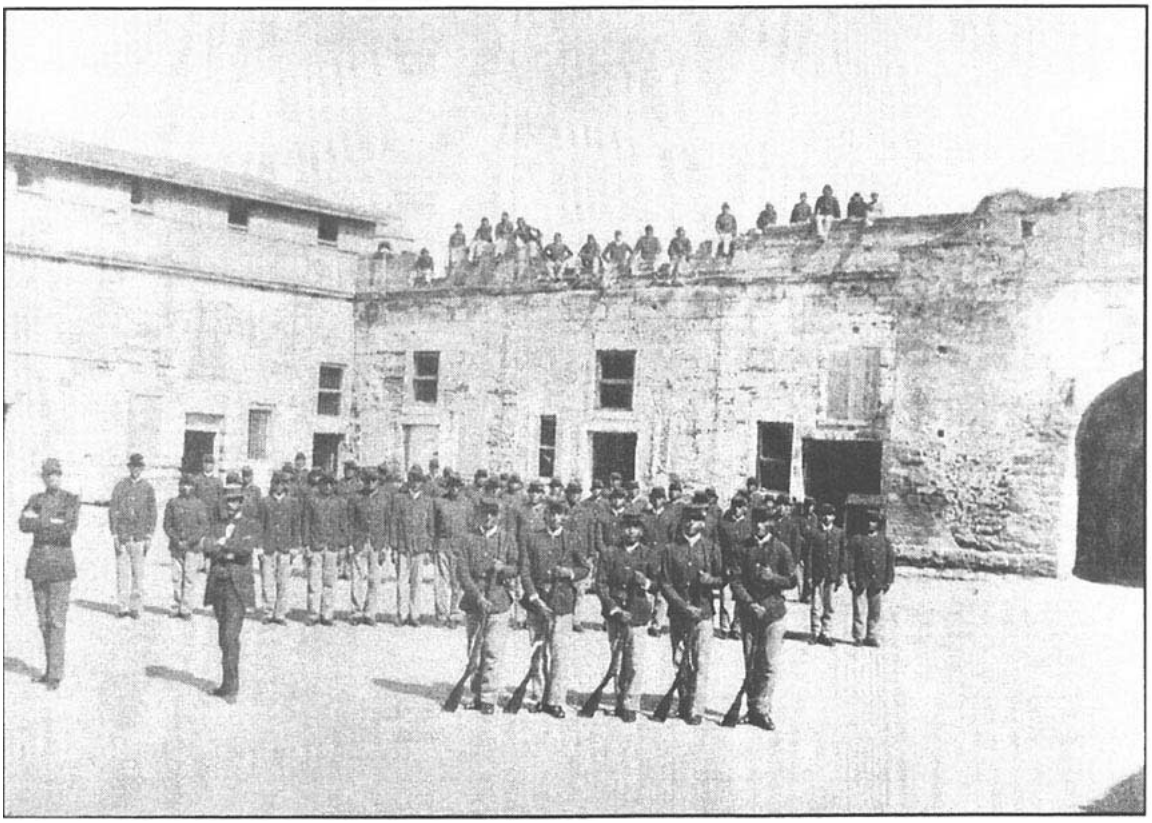

Figure 15. Native American prisoners at Fort Marion, date unknown

[57]Albert Manucy, "Indian School at Fort Marion," chap. 16 in *Great Men and Great Events in St. Augustine,* Albert Manucy, Rhoda Emma Neel, and F. Hilton Crowe (National Park Service, 1939), 5-7.

[58]Omega G. East, *Apache Prisoners in Fort Marion, 1886-1887* (National Park Service, 1951).

FORT MARION NATIONAL MONUMENT

St. Augustine was a popular tourist destination as early as 1830, attracting many northerners with its healthful climate and unique history. The tourism industry continued to grow until the Civil War, when travel between North and South became impossible. Recovery was slow after the war, until Henry M. Flagler, a cofounder of Standard Oil Company, began building his Florida resort dynasty in the 1880s. Flagler's vision of Florida as a rich man's paradise began in St. Augustine, where he opened several hotels catering to America's wealthy elite.[59]

Two of the great attractions of St. Augustine were its European flavor and Spanish colonial architecture, and Fort Marion embodied both of those qualities. From the earliest days of American occupation, visitors to St. Augustine recognized the fort as one of the "must-see" sites in the city. The War Department began giving guided tours of the structure around 1848; tours were in such demand during the incarceration of the western Indians that special permits were required to gain access to the building.[60]

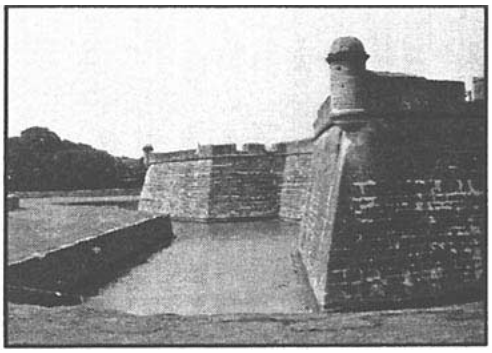

Figure 16. View of moat and east wall from south, 1991

The historical significance of Fort Marion was recognized by local citizens and War Department administrators early in the American period. In a letter requesting Congressional support for needed repairs to the structure in 1832, a local citizen, Judge Robert R. Reid, referred to the fort as "a fine and venerable monument of art" worthy of preservation, and he considered the structure a source of pride to the local community. Military engineers assigned to work in St. Augustine often made similar observations about the strength of the fortress and its historic value to the city and the nation.[61]

In 1884 Congress made the first appropriation for restoration of Fort Marion, which Jere Krakow, in the administrative history of Castillo de San Marcos and Fort Matanzas, describes as a particularly important step toward the structure's preservation:

> *Of all the congressional actions, the most significant one occurred in 1884 when President Chester A. Arthur signed into law an appropriation of $5,000 for restoration and preservation of the Castillo. Preceding the Casa Grande*

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[59]Graham, 189-96.

[60]Jere L. Krakow, *Administrative History of Castillo de San Marcos National Monument and Fort Matanzas National Monument* (National Park Service, 1986), 1-7.

[61]Bearss, 46-7: Krakow, 7.

preservation action by almost five years, it established a little known precedent for the expenditure of federal monies to preserve an historic structure.[62]

Additional appropriations in 1888 and 1890 aided preservation efforts at the fort, and expenditures for restoration continued into the twentieth century.

A disastrous fire in 1914 destroyed much of the downtown of St. Augustine, including the headquarters of the St. Augustine Historical Society and Institute of Science. Searching for a place to house its collections, the society applied to the War Department for use of several casemates at Fort Marion. Under terms of an agreement reached the same year, the Historical Society provided guided tours of the fort for ten cents per person and ran a gift shop selling postcards and other souvenirs. The War Department reserved the right to ensure building maintenance and access to visitors as well as quality of guide service. This arrangement would continue, with modifications, until the National Park Service assumed responsibility for the fort in 1933.[63]

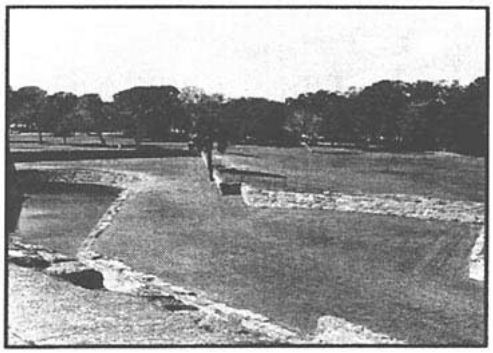

Figure 17. View of moat, covered way, and glacis from east, 1995

In 1924, President Calvin Coolidge, acting under the authority of the Antiquities Act of 1906, declared five forts, including Fort Marion and another Spanish colonial fortification, Fort Matanzas, to be national monuments. This action officially established a government policy of preservation for the two structures. The War Department continued to administer the two forts until 1933, when Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order transferring national monuments, military parks, battlefields, and cemeteries to the National Park Service in the Department of the Interior.[64]

ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES

Castillo de San Marcos and the moat, ravelin, covered way, glacis, water battery, hot shot furnace, and seawall are properties associated with the context, "The United States War Department at Fort Marion, 1821-1933." All eight structures represent the continued use of the fort as a defensive structure throughout the nineteenth century; they also illustrate advances in military architecture and technology that eventually made the fort obsolete.

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[62]Krakow, 8.

[63]Ihid., 14-5.

[64]Ibid., 23-4, 39.

Physical Characteristics

Castillo de San Marcos is a bastioned masonry fortification located north of the colonial town of St. Augustine. The Castillo is built around a square plaza, the sides of which measure 320 feet, and has diamond-shaped bastions projecting outward at each comer. The coquina walls of the Castillo are thirty feet high, ten to fourteen feet thick at the base, and five feet thick at the top. Vaulted casemates support the wide terreplein, and embrasures at intervals along the top of the wall provided openings through which cannon could be fired.

The moat, covered way, and glacis surround the Castillo on the north, west, and south sides. The moat originally encircled the fort on all sides, but the east side was filled in 1842 to create a water battery. The remaining three sides of the moat are framed by coquina walls and contain water; the moat is approximately forty-two feet wide. The covered way is the flat, grassy area between the glacis and the moat; a masonry wall five feet high separates it from the glacis. The glacis is the open, sloped area beyond the covered way that stretches into the landscape. The ravelin is the triangular masonry structure built to afford additional protection to the comers of the bastions. The ravelin is located within the moat on the south side of the fort and is connected to the main structure by a reconstructed drawbridge.

The water battery comprises the east side of Castillo de San Marcos between the curtain wall and the seawall. This area was infilled by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers between 1842 and 1844 to permit the placement of guns facing the harbor. The water battery is constructed of earth and coquina stone. The seawall protects the fort from the waters of Matanzas Bay. Originally built by the Spanish, the seawall was substantially reconstructed by the Army Corps of Engineers between 1833 and 1844. The coquina structure is faced with granite to the high water mark. The hot shot furnace was built in 1844 on top of the water battery. The stuccoed coquina furnace measures nine feet long and eight feet wide, and the chimney is eleven feet high.

Associative Characteristics

Castillo de San Marcos and the moat, covered way, glacis, ravelin, water battery, seawall, and hot shot furnace are closely associated with the continued use of a colonial fortification by the United States Army into the twentieth century. The Castillo served as a military base of operations during the Second Seminole War and the American Civil War. The structure also served as a prison during the Second Seminole War and the Western Indian wars of 1875-1878 and 1886- 1887. The moat, covered way, glacis, and ravelin are all structures closely associated with the defense of the fort and contributed to its ability to remain a part of the coastal defense system during the nineteenth century. The Castillo and its associated structures were also a significant part of the development of tourism in St. Augustine, and their preservation marks early commitment by the U. S. government to the preservation of historic structures under its management.

The seawall, water battery, and hot shot furnace were built between 1833 and 1844 in an attempt to update the Castillo and make it a contributing part of the nineteenth century coastal

defense system. The reconstruction of the seawall by the Army was necessary to protect the fort and the city from erosion and storms and to permit the construction of the water battery. The water battery and hot shot furnace originated as a result of the Second Seminole War and national attempts to prepare the coastline in the event of a naval attack. As such, they represent the military thinking prevalent at the time of their construction. They complement the Castillo, demonstrating the evolution of military engineering and technology.

Significance

Castillo de San Marcos and the moat, covered way, glacis, and ravelin are nationally significant under National Register Criteria A and C. All of these structures were significant during the Second Seminole War, when the fort served as a base of operations for the United States Army against the Seminoles. The structures also played a minor role in the Civil War and the coastal defense system developed by the Army Corps of Engineers during the nineteenth century. During the twentieth century, the Castillo and its associated structures gained additional significance as recipients of federal funding for their preservation. The structures were also contributing factors to tourism development in Florida at the end of the nineteenth century.

The seawall, water battery and hot shot furnace also contribute to the significance of the district under National Register Criteria A and C. The three structures were built in the mid-nineteenth century in order to update the defenses of Castillo de San Marcos, then known as Fort Marion, The reconstruction of the seawall by the Army Corps of Engineers was necessary to insure the safety of the town and fort from high waters and erosion. The construction of the water battery and hot shot furnace was primarily a response to the Second Seminole War and was also a part of the development of the nineteenth century coastal defense system. The structures are significant examples of the military and engineering conventions of their day.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS/INTEGRITY

Castillo de San Marcos National Monument was listed on the National Register in 1966, and documentation accepted in 1977 identified a district with three contributing historic structures, including the Castillo and the water battery. Both the Castillo and the water battery have retained integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The moat, covered way, glacis, ravelin, seawall, and hot shot furnace were included in the original nomination but not individually listed on the National Register. These are independent structures worthy of listing as contributing resources, demonstrating integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The covered way, glacis, ravelin, seawall, and hot shot furnace also retain integrity of design. The moat was altered for construction of the water battery, but the change in design did not significantly impact its integrity.

CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES

Castillo de San Marcos (1672-l756)
Moat (1672- 1696)
Covered way (1672- 1762)
Glacis (1672-1758)
Ravelin (1762)
Water battery (1842)
Seawall (1833-l 842)
Hot shot furnace (1842)

NONCONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES

None